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U.S. Congress. Senate.

Admission of Mexican
agricultural laborers
[Washington, D.C.]

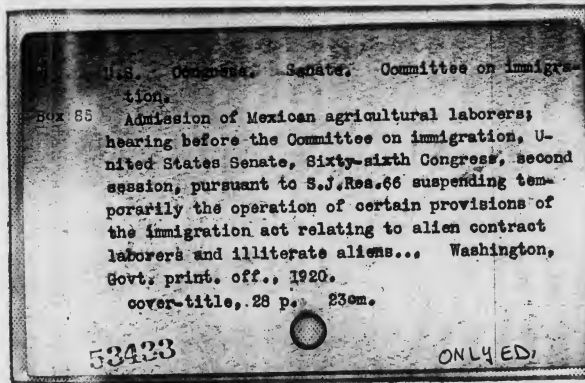
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ADMISSION OF MEXICAN AGRICULTURAL LABORERS

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HEARING

BEFORE

THE COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
UNITED STATES SENATE

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS.
SECOND SESSION

PURSUANT TO

S. J. RES. 66

SUSPENDING TEMPORARILY THE OPERATION OF CERTAIN
PROVISIONS OF THE IMMIGRATION ACT RELATING
TO ALIEN CONTRACT LABORERS AND
ILLITERATE ALIENS

Printed for the use of the Committee on Immigration



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1920

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION.

LEBARON B. COLT, Rhode Island, *Chairman*.

WILLIAM T. DILLINGHAM, Vermont.	THOMAS F. GORE, Oklahoma.
BOIES PENROSE, Pennsylvania.	JOHN F. NUGENT, Idaho.
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WALTER E. EDGE, New Jersey.	JAMES D. PHELAN, California.
HENRY M. BARRY, <i>Clerk</i> .	

ADMISSION OF MEXICAN AGRICULTURAL LABORERS.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1920.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION,
Washington, D. C.

The committee met, pursuant to the call of the chairman, in committee room, capitol, Senator LeBaron B. Colt, presiding.

Present of the committee: Senators Colt (chairman), Sterling, King, Harris, Phelan, and Harrison.

Present also: Senator Sheppard.

The committee then proceeded to the consideration of Senate joint resolution 66, which is here printed in full as follows:

JOINT RESOLUTION (S. J. Res. 66) Suspending temporarily the operation of certain provisions of the immigration act relating to alien contract laborers and illiterate aliens.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the operation of the provisions of section 2 of the act of Congress of February 5, 1917, entitled "An act to regulate the immigration of aliens to, and the residence of aliens in, the United States," relating to the assessment of head tax on aliens entering the United States, and of the provisions of section 3 of said act, excluding from the United States aliens who are contract laborers or aliens who are illiterate, is hereby suspended for the period of one year from and after October 1, 1919, in so far as said provisions affect the entry to the United States of laborers who are citizens of the Republic of Mexico and who are coming to the United States to engage in agricultural pursuits.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Sheppard, you may proceed.

Senator SHEPPARD. Mr. Roberts will speak first, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF MR. FRED ROBERTS, PRESIDENT SOUTH TEXAS COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, at home I am a farmer, and being a farmer I know the needs of Texas. I represent myself here and also represent the South Texas Cotton Growers' Association. I am president of that association.

We are short of labor. The real fact is we have not any labor. Modern machinery has developed very rapidly and has made it possible for one man to cultivate a great deal of land, but there has been no development along the line of picking and chopping cotton. We pick cotton like we did a hundred years ago and we chop cotton like we did a hundred years ago, with the exception that in picking cotton we put it into a sack now where we used to put it into a basket. The greater part of Texas, or perhaps all that country west of the Colorado and south, has always been and is to-day dependent upon

Mexican labor. We have always had free access to the Mexicans on the other side of the border, and we have always been going there for our labor. We have built up the institution of cotton growing there, and millions and millions of dollars have come into that country and developed it on the proposition of the labor at our door. We have never had any labor in that country except as it has been brought in from across the Rio Grande.

As the years have gone by it has become more and more necessary for us to go across the border for our labor because of the increased facilities for farming. Take my own case, for example. I have 850 acres in cultivation. I prepare that soil and plant it and do the plowing with eight men, running two-row planters and two-row cultivators and modern farm machinery. So you see the result of the development in modern machinery has been to broaden out and take in more and do more work.

But when it comes to chopping cotton and picking cotton it takes as many laborers as it ever took. So when this soil is prepared and the cotton is planted and it comes time to chop the cotton—perhaps some of you gentlemen may not understand what is meant by chopping cotton. The cotton is planted by a drill in a 3-foot or 3½-foot row and when the cotton gets as tall as that lead pencil we have to go in there and chop that out. It will take from 60 to 100 hands on this particular place to chop the cotton. When the cotton crop has been matured it will take anywhere from 150 to 200 Mexicans to gather the cotton crop off of the ground that I am talking to you about—on that many acres.

Now, if we are cut off from the border there is not any other place that we can go to get a single human being who will and can pick cotton. The returned soldier will not do it, because he did not pick cotton before he went away; he has merely come home to fill the notch that was left when he went to war. The negro will not do it any longer, because he has what he considers a better job in the North or East, where he can go to the factory district.

So if the agricultural interests of our country are to be continued, if the homes are to be kept up and taxes and interest are to be paid on the investment and on the war debt that was created to wage this war—if we are to do our part we must have laborers.

And we want the Mexican laborer, because we are used to him. We know the Mexican and he knows us. We are not afraid of him. There never was a more docile animal in the world than the Mexican. There are some mean Mexicans, to be sure, but we are not afraid of them. We want that Mexican to come over and do our work because he understands us and we understand him.

It is not any longer a question of price. We are willing to pay the price if we can get the labor, but we can not get laborers at any price. The case I have stated to you relative to myself applies to my neighbors and that entire country.

At the hearing yesterday before the House committee they quoted statistics to show that, I believe, 20,000 Mexicans had been brought in. Twenty thousand Mexicans will not do us any good; we will need 200,000 in the South and West. Those figures are not correct. There are more Mexicans in this country that belong in Mexico than 20,000. There must be 250,000 that belong in Mexico; and when

you pass this law and let it go into effect that no more Mexicans shall come into this country unless each one can pay his \$8 and read and write, that will exclude 90 per cent of them. None of them are the \$8; because if they had the \$8, what in the world would they want to come to the United States for when \$1 in Mexico will carry further than \$10 in the United States, and that is his home.

So, then, what will be the result? Here are Mexican citizens in the United States picking cotton and doing our work. They are going to go home some time; and they will not go across the bridge, either. They will swim the river, and when they get on the other side of the dividing line they can not get back.

Heretofore and up to the present time, instead of 20 per cent remaining in this country when they get through the work, 98 per cent of them have gone back. They practically all go back. That is why we are so anxious as to this thing, because we know that the year is coming to a close in those vast cotton fields in west Texas and north Texas; and when the cotton has been picked those fellows are going to go home, and you can not keep them on this side unless you put them in jail. Of course, a few of them will stay—a few stay each year—but what I want you to understand, gentlemen, is that the great majority will go back. They do go back; they have always gone back; and once back, they can not get across again.

The \$8 head tax would not be so bad if we were allowed to pay it on this side, but we are not. And we can not go on the other side because when you go on the other side you run into trouble with the Mexican authorities. The Mexican Government grants concessions to certain individuals over there, and those men have the right to go in the interior, and do go into the interior, and bring in hundreds and hundreds of Mexicans to the border at Laredo, Brownsville, El Paso, and other places; and if you go over there and try to make any kind of arrangement with those people, even if you were allowed to pay the head tax, the Mexican authorities would put you in jail, because they have given the concession to this man.

Senator HARRISON. When did these Mexicans come into this country, Judge?

Mr. ROBERTS. About the 1st of June or the 15th of May; that is, in south Texas, when we begin to need cotton choppers.

Senator HARRISON. But you were speaking of some that are about to leave now. When did they come over here?

Mr. ROBERTS. They came last summer.

Senator HARRISON. How did they come over here? Did they pay the tax and come in under the requirements of this act of Congress of 1917?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir.

Senator HARRISON. How did they come into this country?

Mr. ROBERTS. They swam the river.

Senator HARRISON. Then they came in, and violated the law by coming in?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator SHEPPARD. Let me say, Senator Harrison, that the law had been suspended on account of the war emergency.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes; the law had been suspended.

Senator HARRISON. Is the law suspended now?

Senator SHEPPARD. No; we have exhausted all the arguments at our command to have the Department of Labor suspend the laws further, but they say they can not, that the war emergency is over, and they can not suspend it longer than February 1 of this year.

The CHAIRMAN. Did they suspend the payment of the \$8?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. As well as the literacy test?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir; Secretary Wilson has, by Executive order, suspended the objectionable features of this law—the features that are objectionable from our standpoint; that is, the \$8 head tax and the literacy test—five times. A committee came up here last summer and got him to extend it from June 30 to January 1, and he absolutely refused to extend it any further, on the ground that the war is over; because this has been done as a war measure. Now, you see, the law is in full operation, and as the law stands, gentlemen, we can not make a crop; or if perchance it should happen to be a dry season and we get through rather easy in making the crop, we can not gather it without the laborers.

Senator HARRISON. Judge, this is an amendment to suspend that provision for one year from October 1, 1919?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator HARRISON. That would be until October 1, 1920. What are you going to do for the following years.

Senator SHEPPARD. They have devised a substitute law that they want to offer instead of this. But go ahead and answer in your own way, Mr. Roberts. We would rather have this, however, than nothing.

Mr. ROBERTS. When this bill was prepared, or introduced—I think it was last summer—it was the understanding of the committee, of which I was chairman when I came up here, that possibly the Immigration Committee—we had understood the Immigration Committee was going to report out the Immigration bill, and we were told it would be impossible to have an amendment to that law, but that possibly we could get this resolution through, and in the meantime this bill would be reported and then we could find a means to amend that bill, which we hoped to do. We want to have an exception made. We had understood this bill would be an exclusion act for a number of years, and we wanted an exception to that, and that is the reason we simply asked for that for one year. However, we introduced in the other committee yesterday a substitute measure.

The point I want to make with you gentlemen is this: That that bill is in force now, and these laborers that came across the border last year, either under the contract system, operating under the suspended clause of the present act, or who swam the river—these people will go home. You can not keep a Mexican from going home. He has always done that. You can go there and find old families that have been coming across that border for 40 years, going out in the interior there and picking cotton. They came when their children were small, and those children have families, and they are still coming. They come very often to the same place, year in and year out. A particular Mexican has been coming to my place now for 10 years.

Now, when the work is done on this side and he has got a few hundred dollars he knows that when he gets on the other side of the

border he has got a little home down there, and the Mexican people have more reverence for home and family, for father and mother, than have the Americans. Of course, they may lack in patriotism, on account of lack of understanding of what Government means, but I am talking about parental love and home love.

Senator HARRISON. Do you not think that when the news sifts down to them that the Federal Government is going to educate them, that will encourage them to stay here and not go back?

Mr. ROBERTS. I do not know whether that would do much good or not; I rather doubt that.

The CHAIRMAN. They are only here temporarily? As I understand it, they are here only four or five months?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. They come in June or July and go back in the fall or winter?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator SHEPPARD. And they have been doing that, Judge, for 40 or 50 years, ever since that section of Texas began to be developed, and it has been the main reliance of that section for this kind of work.

The CHAIRMAN. They do not form a permanent part of our population, do they?

Mr. ROBERTS. No; not as a rule. There are a few that will do that.

The CHAIRMAN. There is no question of Americanization involved here?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir; they all go back.

The CHAIRMAN. They are good people, are they not?

Mr. ROBERTS. They are good people of their class, yes; they are inoffensive. You can take a hundred or two hundred Mexicans out in the brush or camp and live among them and never have any fear of anybody stealing anything you have or murdering you. Those people out there never lock a door.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you not think, Judge, that we are apt to become a little too much prejudiced against other nations and races? Do you not think from what we read and hear about Mexico—

Mr. ROBERTS. Particularly in the Fall hearings.

The CHAIRMAN (continuing). That we may have a somewhat exaggerated view of the lawless character of the people? They are a good people, are they not?

Mr. ROBERTS. The Mexican people as a race; yes, sir. There are lawless Mexicans over there that ought to be hanged, just as there are lawless Americans here. We have no fear of any trouble of that kind.

Those people do not come to this country, gentlemen, for the purpose of establishing citizenship; they come to us because we have dollars that are worth 100 cents on the dollar, and they want that money, and when they get it they are satisfied to go home; and we want that labor.

The CHAIRMAN. They are not plotting against the United States in anyway.

Mr. ROBERTS. Well, there may be some plotters on the other side; yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I say, these people that come here are not plotting against the United States?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir; they are not.

Senator STERLING. Have any of them that have come over, that you know of, belonged to these various bands, such as Villa's?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir; I have a man at my place now, Juan Batista, that has been on both sides of that revolution two or three different times; he says he has.

The CHAIRMAN. You are speaking about the revolution in Mexico?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I am not speaking about that. I am speaking about this menace of anarchism or bolshevism. That does not play any part with the Mexicans?

Mr. ROBERTS. None whatever; no, sir. I have yet to meet the first Mexican who knew anything about it or cared anything about it.

Senator STERLING. Take, for example, a follower of Villa in his raids. Would you regard such a man as a safe man on this side?

Mr. ROBERTS. They are all right; yes, sir.

Senator STERLING. They are all right?

Mr. ROBERTS. Of course, there are individuals—you must understand there are individuals following Villa that are just as mean as the devil wants them to be, but there are hundreds and hundreds of others that have had to join Villa or die. They have no choice. He will come into a town or a ranch, and he will say, "Get into the ranks or get out there and be shot."

Senator SHEPPARD. If those people in northern Mexico were assured of steady employment in the cotton fields on this side of the river, would not the chances then be much smaller for Villa or any other revolutionist?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator SHEPPARD. In fact, it would have a stabilizing effect on our relations if this custom that has prevailed for so many years could be preserved and that transient labor have the privilege of coming over and doing this work of clearing the fields and picking the cotton?

Mr. ROBERTS. You are absolutely correct.

The CHAIRMAN. We have a law now that requires the literacy test and the \$8 head tax. That applies generally?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, you are asking us to suspend that law for one year?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Must you not show some exceptional circumstances in order to justify the suspension of the law in that way? And I think you are trying to do it.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir; I think so. I think I can. Our ground for asking the suspension of the \$8 head tax is twofold. First of all, they have not got the \$8. In the second place, we have got to have the Mexicans in order to carry on our business that has been built up on that identical proposition. You take a territory as large as the New England States, or larger, that for 50 or 60 years has gotten its labor from one source, where the farmers in the country have built upon that kind of labor, and have always gone there to get it; when you enact a law that will cut that off, then you are destroying an industry that has billions in it, not millions; and if that law stands

and you put a guard on the river or along the border so that they can not get across, then you are going to see property values depreciate in that country and 50 to 60 per cent of our land lie idle.

The CHAIRMAN. What you are stating, Judge, is true in a less degree of, I will say, the New England manufacturers to-day. The New England manufacturers depend upon foreign labor to a large extent. Much of that labor is illiterate. They now want additional labor, and they are handicapped because they can not have it. They can not meet the demand for the product of the mills, because they are short of labor. Now, suppose they should come to us and say, "Here, the business of the country is more important than the menace of our alien population to our institutions, and therefore we would like to have a law which will permit us to admit the illiterates." I do not mean to say that the case there is as extreme as your case, and I think your case differs from it, not only in the necessity but also in the fact that that is a floating population that never gives up its nationality, but merely comes here temporarily and goes back. Is not that true?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir. Now, in answer to that question, I do not know the needs of New England, but I will put my proposition on this basis. If the men or the race that we are asking to come to this country were a menace to our social institutions, I would say exclude them; but the Mexican is not a menace; he is not any more a menace to our institutions than the pet dogs are in any other country to that community, because he comes here and does a service that nobody else can do on account of climatic conditions.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not think any race is a menace to our institutions, except the reds.

Mr. ROBERTS. The reds, wherever they come from.

The CHAIRMAN. And they are a very small percentage.

Mr. ROBERTS. And if the man who wants to come in up there is not a menace to our institutions, I would say let him come in. That is my doctrine.

Senator STERLING. What about the colored labor?

Mr. ROBERTS. The Negroes in that country have come North and East, wherever they can go to the cities. We used to go to Dallas and Shreveport, and over in Louisiana, and get hundreds and hundreds of Negroes, but they are not there any more.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you give any figures as to that migration of the Negroes to the North?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir; I can not.

The CHAIRMAN. Perhaps you have a greater demand for labor, and you do have a less supply from that source?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir. I can state this: Twenty years ago I could go to Houston, get in there one night, and by the next night load out 200, 500, or 1,000 Negroes, just depending on how many I wanted, and they would go. I went to Houston last year, stayed there three days, and got 7 Negroes to help me, and the 7 Negroes deserted after I got them down to the cotton patch.

Senator STERLING. Which is the more reliable for that kind of work, the average colored man that you might pick up or the average Mexican?

Mr. ROBERTS. I will take my chances with the Mexican.

Senator STERLING. What about the wages you would pay them, respectively?

Mr. ROBERTS. They are all paid identically the same, whites, blacks, and Mexicans.

Senator HARRISON. What are you paying them to pick cotton?

Mr. ROBERTS. We paid last year \$1.50 a hundred and furnished them a house and wood and water, and hauled them to town on Saturday—the Mexican will not work on Saturday and neither will a Negro; they work five days a week. You have to haul them to town on Saturday and haul them back, and when they get ready to leave you haul them to the railroad station.

Senator STERLING. Is not the Mexican a little more steady in his work?

Mr. ROBERTS. There are certain kinds of work in which they will be. A Negro will do more work than a Mexican while he works.

Senator STERLING. But he is not as reliable in sticking to the job?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir; there was a time when the Negroes were more reliable than they are now.

Senator PHELAN. What is their average earning on that basis?

Mr. ROBERTS. Of a Mexican in the cotton patch? I should say from \$3 to \$3.50; it depends on how they work.

Senator PHELAN. That is an average?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator PHELAN. And he feeds himself.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir; feeds himself. We furnish wood, and water, and houses, and whatever conveniences they have to have for shelter.

Senator HARRISON. Do any Mexican women come over?

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir. We rely on the women more than we do on anybody else.

Senator HARRISON. Is there any cotton unpicked in your section now?

Mr. ROBERTS. No, sir; it is all picked. The storm picked it on the 14th of September.

Senator PHELAN. You are speaking now only for south Texas.

Mr. ROBERTS. South Texas; yes, sir; but in west Texas and north Texas lots of cotton is picked by Mexican labor; especially in west Texas.

Now, to give you gentlemen an idea of how much help we will have to have, our county last year imported about 6,500 Mexicans from the border; in 1918, from 8,500 to 9,000.

Senator HARRIS. What is the population of your county?

Mr. ROBERTS. I should say from 40,000 to 50,000. That includes Corpus Christi, a town of 20,000 or 25,000 people. It is an agricultural county.

Senator HARRIS. About a third of your labor on the farms then is Mexican labor?

Mr. ROBERTS. Well, perhaps half of our labor down on the farms is Mexican. We have a good many Mexican citizens in that country.

Senator PHELAN. I understand that during the war this regulation was relaxed.

Mr. ROBERTS. Yes, sir.

Senator PHELAN. What was the condition before the war?

Mr. ROBERTS. The condition prior to the war—when we wanted help we went to Laredo, and it was there—came across the river.

Senator PHELAN. That was a violation of the law?

Mr. ROBERTS. That law was not in force.

Senator HARRISON. This law was passed in 1917.

Mr. ROBERTS. You see, the point I am trying to set out is that we have had labor free to come across the border, and when we wanted help all we had to do was go to the border and we could get it. Now, we have not any help; there is no place to go to get any help. It will take 250,000 Mexicans from somewhere to make and gather a normal cotton crop this year, 1920, in addition to the labor in the country, and they are going across the border by the thousands. They are not going through the ports, but they are going across. You can get in a wagon or automobile or train and travel through that country, and see hundreds and hundreds of little caravans going toward the border, going back home, and they will go home in spite of any kind of law on this side or the other side. But when we want them next summer, then they will find a barrier that they can not overcome.

Of course, if this law stands, if you do not put a river guard on there, we will get our help all right. If you gentlemen have any objections to admitting the Mexicans by law, cut them out and take the river guard away and let us alone, and we will get them all right.

Senator PHELAN. That is, if Congress does not pass my bill appropriating money for the river guard?

Mr. ROBERTS. I prefer to get them lawfully, if I can.

Senator PHELAN. We are going to put a guard down there to keep out the Japanese.

Mr. ROBERTS. Now, gentlemen, if there is any question you want to ask me I will be glad to try to answer it. There are some other gentlemen here that know more about this than I do. I thank you very kindly.

Senator SHEPPARD. Mr. Miller.

STATEMENT OF MR. ROY MILLER, REPRESENTING THE RURAL LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to state, in order that you may appreciate the importance of this matter to Texas and the interests which I represent, that I represent the Rural Land Owners' Association, which has within its jurisdiction 20 counties in the south Texas coast country, a territory about 250 miles in length and about 100 miles in width, a territory which has within its confines probably 20,000,000 acres of land, about 2,500,000 of which is now in cultivation.

I also represent, by appointment, the Texas Cattle Raisers' Association. Also, in order that the record may show it, I would like to present a letter which I received upon leaving Texas from our governor [reading]:

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,
Austin, Tex., January 22, 1920.

HON. ROY MILLER,
St. Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, Tex.

DEAR MR. MILLER: I have learned of your contemplated trip to Washington as a representative of the Texas Cattle Raisers' Association and of the Rural Landowners' Association in behalf of the resolution now pending before Congress concerning Mexican labor.

This resolution, I believe, was presented in the Senate by Senator Sheppard and in the House by Representative Hudspeth. Of course, Senator Sheppard and Representative Hudspeth are both cognizant of the tremendous value to Texas this labor is in the production of crops. We all recall the large quantity lost of the past year's production by reason of insufficient labor.

I have communicated with each member of the Texas delegation in Congress in behalf of this measure, and I would very greatly appreciate it if you could find it compatible with your duties as representative of the organizations you appear for, to act and appear as my official representative, and this letter will serve as your authority to represent the State.

With personal regards and good wishes for a successful trip, I am,

Sincerely, your friend,

W. P. HOBBS,
Governor.

Now, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the committee, I think we are all appreciative of the difficulties which stand in the way of action upon the part of Congress to give us this needed relief. We all stand, of course, for 100 per cent Americanism, and we stand for whatever legislative action may be necessary to protect this Government and ourselves against the assaults of those from the outside who would destroy it.

Mr. Roberts has, I think, convinced you, as the chairman indicated by his remark, that these people do not constitute a menace in that respect.

Now, let me just give you this viewpoint, which is ours. Southwest Texas—that is to say, that portion of the State which lies south of San Antonio, and from Victoria south—an area which is larger than many States of the Union, has been built up upon Mexican labor. The Mexican is indigenous to that territory. He was there before the white man came. As you well know, that section of Texas lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was a bone of contention away back before this Government went into Mexico. So when the white people went there and began this agricultural development they found the Mexican there, and he supplied the necessary labor which in other sections of the South has, until recent years, been supplied by the Negro. And so our agricultural development has been predicated and based entirely upon the aid of the Mexicans. It would not have occurred without his help.

Senator KING. Did the advent of the whites to the section to which you have referred expel the Mexican from the confines of that territory?

Mr. MILLER. Not at all; they were there in, you might say, their native capacity, and engaged in the ranching business as assistants to the ranchmen.

Senator KING. I was wondering whether or not there was any very material migration from what subsequently became a part of the United States with the advent of the whites.

Mr. MILLER. I think not. I think, on the other hand, that the immigration from the other side increased as the need for their labor increased.

Now, this is the way that we look at the matter, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee: We have always had the benefit of this labor; we have always depended upon it. Until now we have not felt the effects of the restrictions in this law, which became effective on the 5th of February, 1917, because, as has been stated to you, these restrictions from time to time have been suspended. Consequently

until now we had no cause to complain, for the reason that, the restrictions being suspended, we were permitted to get the labor we needed.

Great agricultural development has taken place in that section. Take Nueces County, to which Mr. Roberts referred. We have in that county probably 125,000 acres devoted to cotton culture alone. Not an acre of that land was in cultivation, say, 10 or 12 years ago. In the Rio Grande Valley, that remarkable valley which reaches from Brownsville up a distance of 50 or 60 miles before the hills meet the river, there are in cultivation thousands of acres devoted to truck. I was in the valley just a week ago, and I was told they had 13,500 acres in cabbage alone, and they expect to ship out within the next six or eight weeks 6,500 carloads of cabbage. In the territory between there and San Antonio, a distance of 150 miles, there are probably thousands of acres devoted to Bermuda onions and other kinds of truck.

All of that activity has been developed with the assistance of Mexican labor. We have in our delegation now appearing before the House committee men who represent the truck industry. From the territory in the vicinity of Laredo and from Asherton and Carrizo Springs, north of Laredo, there will be shipped out probably 2,500 carloads of onions, beginning the middle of March or the 1st of April. The Mexican is absolutely essential to the harvesting of that crop.

Senator SHEPPARD. Is it not a fact that while no migration of Mexicans to Mexico resulted from the advent of the whites, the increasing development has made it necessary to draw more and more upon Mexico for labor?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir; I thought I had made that point clear.

Senator PHELAN. What other kinds of labor have you?

Mr. MILLER. We have practically no other labor.

Senator KING. Do they not establish some kind of habitat there, so that they become fixed?

Mr. MILLER. Occasionally some of them remain, but, as Mr. Roberts has said, the great majority of them go back into Mexico. And from one standpoint that works to our advantage, because there is not sufficient employment for these people in our agricultural pursuits to require them the year around.

I might say this also, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: All of south Texas is covered with a growth of mesquite and cactus, and the land must be grubbed and cleared before it can be put into cultivation. All of that work—and there have been thousands of acres put in cultivation—has been done with the aid of the Mexican. He is the only man we have been able to get to grub the land.

Senator STERLING. Do many Mexicans own ranches or farms?

Mr. MILLER. You will find a considerable number; yes. There are some who have been there a good many years who have little ranches and little farms, and many of them develop into very good citizens. In my home town of Corpus Christi we have a permanent Mexican population of probably 2,000 or maybe 2,500. They have been there, many of them, since the town was established.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the total population of the town?

Mr. MILLER. Well, since the storm, Mr. Chairman, I do not know. We claim 20,000.

Senator PHELAN. Do these Mexicans vote?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, indeed.

Senator PHELAN. There is no educational qualification for the suffrage?

Mr. MILLER. Not in Texas; no. There has not been. They become American citizens and attend our schools; their children graduate from our high schools—

Senator SHEPPARD. You are speaking now of Mexican citizens?

Mr. MILLER. Mexican citizens who become naturalized; yes, sir.

Senator PHELAN. The point I wished to develop was that these Mexicans who are brought over the border every season and who return are capable of becoming good citizens should they remain; they have the making of good citizens in them?

Mr. MILLER. I think so. We people who live down in that section of Texas have a very high regard for the Mexican. He is not a bad man. From our standpoint, the trouble with them over in Mexico now is that they are hungry.

Senator HARRISON. Of course, you never vote those fellows that just come in and stay a while?

Mr. MILLER. No; not now. They may have done that there years ago, but they do not do it any more. I have heard some talk of that having been done in the old days.

The CHAIRMAN. Your native white population would not supply you at all, would it?

Mr. MILLER. Not at all, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. You have a few?

Mr. MILLER. We have a few; but, as Mr. Roberts, who is a practical farmer, has stated to you, he has on his farm of 850 acres five or six families who are there permanently who assist in the preparation of the soil and do the cultivating work. But cotton is different from any other crop that I know anything about—

The CHAIRMAN. What negro population have you there?

Mr. MILLER. We have in Corpus Christi, I should say, not over 500 negroes. They are nowadays better adapted to certain work in the cities, and they are leaving the country and going to the cities, attracted by shorter hours and higher pay.

Senator PHELAN. Is there any intermarriage between the Mexicans and the whites?

Mr. MILLER. I might say no. Of course, in the early days there were now and then, as with the white man and the Indian, some cases of that kind. A few of our citizens in that section to-day have a trace of Mexican blood in them, but of course that dates back 40 or 50 years ago.

The CHAIRMAN. But, as you figure it out, you must have these Mexicans to harvest your crop?

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, that states the situation in a nutshell. We must have the same privilege of getting this Mexican labor in the future as we have had in the past, or else not less than 50 per cent of the land now under cultivation in south Texas will lie idle during the years to come.

The CHAIRMAN. The necessity is so great that if we do not put a guard on the Rio Grande they will swim across? Is that it?

Mr. MILLER. I believe that is true, Mr. Chairman. I am not at all familiar with the practical workings of it.

The CHAIRMAN. Of course, we can not deal with that phase of it. Mr. MILLER. I imagine that is true.

Senator SHEPPARD. But you could not get a sufficient number in that manner? That would be a very precarious remedy?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Of course we can not proceed on that theory.

Mr. MILLER. The only thing that would cause that would be the fact that these Mexicans knew there was a chance to get food and clothes on this side of the river which they can not get on the other side.

Now, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, this constantly increasing tendency to shorten hours of labor in the city is producing a very serious problem on the farms. In that respect, I suppose our section does not differ from many other sections of the country, but we have noted that in Texas in this way: Ten years ago the cotton farmers of south Texas were dependent upon the negro, but as time has gone on opportunities for higher wages and more agreeable and easier employment in the city have taken the negro from the cotton fields to the cities, with the result that there are counties in Texas now, as in the black-land belt of north and central Texas, around Waco and Dallas, and even up in the Panhandle, which are dependent upon Mexican labor. I was told by the immigration officer in Laredo only last Wednesday that one farmer in Cottle county away up in the Panhandle, had come down there last summer and gotten 90 Mexican laborers to assist them up there in the gathering of their cotton crop. And there are many fields of cotton up in that section of Texas to-day which are unpicked.

Senator PHELAN. Is cotton grown on the other side of the border? Mr. MILLER. There is practically no development, Senator, in cotton on the other side of the border.

Senator KING. You know of no reservoir to which you might go to supply your needs?

Mr. MILLER. There is no other source, Senator, so far as we know. There is the need, and if the Mexican labor is not given us to supply that need the need will not be supplied, and the production of Texas will be curtailed, in our judgment, Mr. Chairman, to the extent of 1,000,000 bales of cotton this year.

Senator SHEPPARD. Not only in Texas, Mr. Chairman, but in the other regions along the border, running as far west as California.

Mr. MILLER. There are gentlemen here, of course, who can speak as to that phase of it.

Senator PHELAN. You say you have no Chinese or Japanese in all that district?

Mr. MILLER. None whatever, Senator. I personally know of about two Japanese truck farmers just south of Houston who have been there a number of years.

Senator PHELAN. But they are not a factor?

Mr. MILLER. Not at all.

Senator KING. Is it not a fact that there are no Japanese or Chinese in any of the northern territories of Mexico and that that is a mere myth with some of the newspapers of the United States?

Mr. MILLER. That is my idea about it. Senator. I have been in the district along the border on the other side from Matamoras to Nuevo Laredo frequently.

Senator PHELAN. Of course, they do not stay in Mexico. They pass through Mexico into the United States, for the same reason that these Mexicans come over the border—there is more lucrative employment here.

Senator KING. But there are very few Japanese in Mexico.

Senator PHELAN. I say, they do not stay there. They use Mexico as an avenue by which they approach the United States. The shipping companies from Japan bring them as far south as Callao, in Peru, because, under the gentlemen's agreement, they can not ship them to the United States, and they have agreed. I understand, not to ship them to Mexico. They have gone as far south, the Immigration Department tells me, as Callao, and then purchased a return ticket from Callao to Mexico, and come here through Mexico.

Senator KING. There is one more question I want to ask: Do any of these Mexicans who come to the United States for agricultural labor belong to the Carranzistas, or any of the revolutionary parties there?

Mr. MILLER. Senator, I do not believe they know a thing in the world about it—the ones that we get in or country. They are an ignorant class. They are peaceable, and they are docile. I do not really believe they know who the President of Mexico is. The truth of the matter is, we people who live in that section believe the trouble with Mexico is that the people are hungry, and they will follow this leader, or that leader, or any other leader who will offer to feed them and give them clothes; and they know absolutely nothing about the cause that he represents. I think one of the greatest services the people of this country could render the people of Mexico to-day would be some arrangement whereby they could come across and help us and get paid for it. That would do more than anything else to tranquilize conditions on the border.

Senator KING. How far South do you penetrate Mexico in getting this labor?

Mr. MILLER. We get our help just across the border. It comes there from the interior of Mexico, probably. The word will pass through the country that if they come to the border they can get opportunity for employment on our side. They usually make an arrangement with some labor contractor who is located, say, at Brownsville or Laredo—just across on the other side.

Senator KING. Do you know whether those labor contractors oppress the men whom they bring in and extort from them any considerable portion of the moneys which they derive from their labor?

Mr. MILLER. Not on this side, at all. They charge a dollar a head—the custom is—from the man who wants the labor; that is to say, he has to pay that for his service in collecting the labor for him. But there is absolutely no extortion.

Senator KING. There is no peonage in it, at all?

Mr. MILLER. Not in the slightest. The truth of the matter is that there is no way that our farmers who employ these laborers can protect themselves, even after they go to the expense of probably \$10 or \$15 a head to pay their transportation, to keep them longer than a day. They are free to come and go as they please.

Senator PHELAN. There is no attempt to keep them on this side of the border by providing houses, and so on?

Mr. MILLER. Oh, yes. Yes; we provide those facilities, but there is no oppression.

Senator KING. There is no attempt by the employer to retain their services? They are free to go some place else.

Senator PHELAN. The testimony here is that they will inevitably move over the border and return to Mexico.

Mr. MILLER. After the cotton has been picked.

Senator PHELAN. The reason for that is that they have, possibly, homes in Mexico?

Mr. MILLER. Their relatives are there, they have their home there, and they want to go back.

Senator PHELAN. They have a strong sentiment of nationality?

Mr. MILLER. There is a strong sentiment of love of their native land, but just how much further than that it goes I do not know. But our experience with this class of labor, gentlemen, has been entirely satisfactory. They have at no time proved a menace to our social order in the slightest degree. The fact of the matter is they have enabled us, and they alone, to bring about a wonderful development down in that section of Texas—a development that stands in jeopardy now by reason of the possibility of losing their help, because we can not farm our lands.

The CHAIRMAN. Suppose you had a hundred come over for the purpose of harvesting the cotton crop. How many would probably return out of that hundred?

Mr. MILLER. I believe, as Mr. Roberts has already stated, Mr. Chairman, that after the cotton has been picked most of them will return to Mexico. I would not attempt to hazard a guess. He said 98 per cent. I suppose that would be correct.

Senator KING. Senator, we had a number in my State, and my advices are that every one returned.

The CHAIRMAN. It shows that some people do like Mexico, does it not?

Senator KING. There is one question there that is not quite cognate, but I would like to ask it. Your State has millions of acres of fine, fertile land?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. Which would afford homes to hundreds of thousands and millions of people. Now, there has been a vast amount of talk about furnishing homes for the soldiers. Do any of these soldiers that have returned to Texas, who have lived there, or returning soldiers from other States, go out and take up those new lands and develop them where the lands are cheap? And if they do not, why do they not?

Mr. MILLER. I can not answer that question to your satisfaction further than to say that there has not been a great deal of that in our immediate section. But that has been due, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, to a large extent to this condition: In order to put that land in cultivation you have to have a large number of Mexicans to grub the soil, to grub the growth which is on the soil, and we are unable and have been unable to get a sufficient supply of labor for that purpose. I undertook on my own account last June to put

into cultivation 2,000 acres of land in which I am interested, located about 25 miles from Corpus Christi. It is covered with a heavy growth of mesquite, but is as fertile as any of the Illinois prairies, or any part of the Mississippi Valley, but I was unable to get the labor to do that work. Countless thousands of acres of as fine land as you can find anywhere under the sun will remain in its virgin state unless we can get this labor.

Before these restrictions were put into effect which made it necessary for these men to return within a certain length of time the practice of these Mexicans was to pick the cotton and then go to grubbing the land, and spend the winter there as well, and there are millions of acres of land in Texas which might add their quota to increasing the production of the Nation and of the world that will lie dormant unless we have this labor to help us put it in cultivation.

Senator KING. The fact is, the American is ceasing to be an agriculturist per se; is not that true? They are drifting to the cities, preferring the city life to the agricultural life?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. Our city boys will not work on the farm, and our farm boys are going to the cities?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir. I think the gravest problem in this country to-day is to do something to make farm life more attractive in order to increase production.

Senator PHELAN. Are the proprietors down there all white men?

Mr. MILLER. Practically all white men in our section. We have some very large ranchers south of Corpus Christi. We have the famous King ranch with a million and a quarter acres. The policy of the owners of these large bodies of land, however, is to sell the land to the man who will put it in cultivation.

Senator SHEPPARD. And on very easy terms, as I understand.

Senator PHELAN. Has the State of Texas any laws such as the California law for land settlement?

Mr. MILLER. No, sir; but these large owners do make very attractive terms. Representing some of them down there, I sell land for them upon the basis of no cash payment, providing the land is put into cultivation.

Senator PHELAN. This answers Senator King's question, doubtless, about the native American boys on the farm. California has a law by which large tracts are subdivided, and they are given 34 years in which to pay.

Mr. MILLER. It will do no good to establish these farmers in our section of the country, because that is essentially a cotton and truck country, which needs at certain stated times an abnormal supply of labor.

Senator STERLING. You say it is essentially a cotton and truck country. Is cotton a dependable crop there?

Mr. MILLER. It is the most dependable crop that we have, Senator; yes, sir.

Senator STERLING. I had rather supposed it was a little dry there. Mr. MILLER. Cotton is a comparatively dry-weather plant. We have an average of 27 inches of rain there a year, and our one danger is really the danger of too much rain at one certain time, rather than not sufficient rain.

If there are any further questions, I would be glad to try to answer them. I want to leave the matter with the committee in this way, that it means the very life of our section of the country down there. If this bill does not reach the situation, we hope that in the wisdom of this committee some plan may be devised whereby we may continue to enjoy the benefits of this labor in the future as we have in the past, so that our lands which are now in cultivation may continue to produce their full quota, which is so sorely needed at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. There is no plan that can be devised, is there, that will meet the situation unless you take off the \$8 head tax and do away with the literacy test?

Mr. MILLER. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, of any other plan. What we would like, just to state it simply, is to preserve the status quo which has existed up to now in order that we may get our laborers when we need them.

Senator PHELAN. Did you say the bill provided that that suspension should be for one year?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir.

Senator SHEPPARD. Have you the substitute bill which has been submitted?

Mr. MILLER. Yes. It is very short, and I will be glad to read it.

Senator PHELAN. You were about to say that when the time was up—

Mr. MILLER. Then we will need further relief.

Senator SHEPPARD. In view of the fact, Senator Phelan, the delegation here has devised a substitute resolution which Mr. Miller will put in the record.

Mr. MILLER. The substitute resolution is as follows:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the operation of the provisions of section 2 of the act of Congress of February 5, 1917, entitled "An act to regulate the immigration of aliens to and the residence of aliens in the United States" relating to aliens entering the United States, is hereby amended as follows:

That the provisions of the before-mentioned act of Congress of February 5, 1917, shall not apply to native-born citizens of Mexico, Canada, Newfoundland, or Cuba: Provided, That when the Secretary of Labor deems an emergency exists in a shortage of common or unskilled labor he shall admit for such length of time and under such rules and regulations as he deems proper, such alien laborers from the above-mentioned countries, suspending the provisions of section 3 of the before-mentioned act relating to aliens, who are contract laborers or aliens who are illiterate, and waiving the payment of the head tax at present charged all immigrants.

In other words, our understanding of this is that it would operate to give the Secretary of Labor the authority which he has exercised until now as a war measure.

The CHAIRMAN. You extend that to Canada, too?

Mr. MILLER. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And Cuba?

Mr. MILLER. Cuba and Newfoundland.

Senator PHELAN. I addressed a letter to the Department of Labor on this subject, and received a reply from Mr. Post. I asked him what the intentions of the department were with respect to the suspension of the law which had been in vogue during the period of

the war, and he said that the war necessity had passed in the judgment of the department, as I recollect his reply, and that unless there was an amendment to the law they would not persevere in that course, realizing they were acting without authority. Now, you are willing to trust the discretion of the Department of Labor in a matter of this kind? That department has just decided that the war necessity has passed; they are not speaking of the industrial necessity.

Mr. MILLER. I have a letter from Mr. Post, written a couple of months ago. I understood from that letter—I have not it with me—that, without passing upon the necessity, they concluded they did not have the authority.

Senator PHELAN. Now, you want to give them authority by your amendment?

Mr. MILLER. That is what the amendment provides for.

Senator PHELAN. And you believe they sufficiently understand the problem there to give you relief under the discretion which the act provides?

Senator KING. Do you not think there will be such pressure from labor organizations that the Secretary of Labor, under your bill, would refuse to exercise the discretion and permit the entrance of these people?

Mr. MILLER. I think some of us realized that possibility, but this amendment was agreed to. I had nothing to do with its preparation, because it occurred to us as following the line of least resistance that there might be some hope of getting an amendment of that kind which would be permanent in its nature.

Senator SHEPPARD. Mr. Chairman, there are several other gentlemen to be heard. I will call on Mr. Knox, of Arizona.

STATEMENT OF MR. W. H. KNOX, PRESIDENT ARIZONA COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

Mr. Knox. Mr. Chairman, I represent the long-staple cotton industry of Arizona, and also to a certain extent the sugar industry of California, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming.

We want the committee to understand that this is not a sectional problem, it is national. We are probably the largest single importer of Mexican labor under the restrictions of the immigration law. We have about 2,000 members in the organization of which I am at present president and general manager. We are farmers, varying from 10 acres to several thousand acres. The long-staple cotton industry has been fostered by the Department of Agriculture for a good many years, and is to-day the only chance the United States has of producing anything like sufficient long staple cotton to supply its needs. We have grown in the last three years from an acreage of 6,000 to ninety some thousand, and expect this coming year to increase to 160,000 acres providing we get this relief in the labor situation.

Like southern Texas, we depend now, always have depended, and always will depend upon Mexico as a source of labor. Unfortunately we are not in a position where we can bring them across the river. If we can not bring them to the immigration office we can

not get them, because the topography of the country in that section renders it impossible to obtain them in any other way. During the past year we have moved practically 10,000 people—imported them for the purpose of harvesting our cotton crop. We have lost no cotton; we have harvested the crop and harvested it successfully. We have had the closest cooperation of the Department of Labor through the immigration office, and the work has been entirely successful.

Senator KING. Has there been any objection whatever by white laborers on the American side?

Mr. Knox. No, sir; I was just coming to that, Senator. If there is a State in the Union that has a radical labor union element it is Arizona. You have only to think back to the time when down at Bisbee they deported some 1,200 reds to convince you of that. In fact, some of our prominent politicians, as we happen to know, carry red cards.

In the Arizona State Federation of Labor, in its session early in November, this question came up of importing this Mexican labor, and we came in for a pretty thorough grilling. They attempted to pass a resolution condemning us. When they got through the resolution read that they requested the Arizona Cotton Growers' Association to use all means at their disposal and in their power to obtain local help, but when there was not sufficient local help they thought they should have the privilege of importing Mexican labor in any quantities that they needed, and without restriction so far as the resolution was concerned; which was something we were not asking for because we were perfectly willing to abide by any restriction that the Department of Labor imposed. I might say that several times in the carrying out of this work that we are in right now the Department of Labor has put on restrictions that were absolutely prohibitive, and we have come here to Washington and gone to Mr. Caminetti, Mr. Post, and Mr. Wilson and ironed these difficulties out, and we have found them always willing to cooperate in every way to obtain the best results.

Now, the question has been asked several times about the return of the Mexicans to Mexico. I would like to tell just one short story to show how deep that love of home is. Some two years ago we brought out a Mexican that had been an officer in Diaz's army, under the old régime. He was a young man of the better class, well educated, had a beautiful wife, and a very pretty little child. We put him out on a ranch in charge of one of the commissaries. He stayed there a year and his work was absolutely satisfactory. There never was a question of shortage in the accounts, or anything else.

One day he came up to the rancher and said, "Mr. Hudson, I want to go back to Mexico." The man says, "Now, Cassus, don't you know if you go back to Mexico the probability is they will kill you." "Well," he says, "I can not help that. Mexico is my country. I love it. I want to see my people. It is my home, and I must go." He went. He had been there some few months, and one night there was a rap at the door. He answered it and there were about half a dozen men standing there. The leader said, "Cassus, we want you to come with us." He says, "All right; wait till I get my clothes." They said, "You do not need any clothes; you come with us." They took that man out, stood him up at the wall and shot him. In 15

minutes from the time they rapped at his door he was dead. That man knew when he went back there what he was walking into, and yet he went. If you can explain it, I can not.

Senator PHELAN. Why did they execute him?

Mr. KNOX. I do not know. The probability was that it was some of the Carranzistas who suspected him possibly of being too closely mixed up with some of the Villistas at that time.

Senator STERLING. Was he regarded as one of Villa's adherers?

Mr. KNOX. No; and he was always very quiet, very peaceable, just as nice a man as you would ask to meet. Those things may seem rather strange, but we down on the border get used to them, because it happens not once but very often.

The CHAIRMAN. Is not that an illustration of the dominating power of nationality?

Mr. KNOX. I think it is, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. It is an elemental impulse. We have it as well.

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Every nation has it.

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And when it assumes an aggressive form it is the cause of all war?

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

Senator STERLING. Mr. Knox, one of the witnesses has testified as to the resident Mexicans, that some were naturalized and some, perhaps not yet naturalized, but men who owned farms. Is that true over in your State of Arizona?

Mr. Knox. The part of Arizona that we live in, of course, formerly belonged to Mexico, but there is a very small proportion of those people there. We have, of course, our resident population who have lived there 30 or 40 years.

Senator STERLING. How are these people affected by the disturbances across the border? Do they take sides or are they indifferent?

Mr. KNOX. Absolutely indifferent. Let me give you one illustration of that. We began our importation this year on the 27th of August and it just followed the punitive expedition into Mexico after the bandits that had gotten those aviators. Now, the Mexican officials, the head men, are always antagonistic to the United States, for some reason. We had sent out word that we were going to start shipping on a certain date, and these Mexicans began to drift up to the border. The word had gone down probably 400 or 500 miles below the border, and they began concentrating in Nogales.

The Mexican officials said to them, "Where are you going?" They asked a good many of them that.

"We are going up the Salt River Valley."

"What are you going up there for?"

"We are going up there to pick cotton."

"Don't you know that those people up there will kill you?"

"No; they are our friends."

"Why, we are liable to be at war with them."

"It does not make any difference. They are our friends. We have been there before, and we know them."

He said, "Don't you know that the American Army is in Mexico right now and that we are liable to be at war with them?"

"All right; if we are going to be at war we would rather be up in the United States than down here. Those people are our friends."

Now, take this proposition of the elemental love of home. It is stronger in children probably than in grown people. Remember that the average peon—Mexican—we use that word for the average laboring Mexican; not that they are in peonage, you understand—develops mentally to about a 12 or 14 year old child. Their mental development does not pass that stage. They are children. We handle them as children. We understand them. We figure on that; we know it. We have handled, as I have said, at one time, 10,000 of those people. They are the most tractable people, the easiest to handle, that I have ever seen.

Senator SHEPPARD. You mean those that never go to school, that have no advantages?

Mr. KNOX. I mean the average peon Mexican that we bring across the border. You can take the merchant class and you get a little higher grade. We do not get many of that class.

Senator PHELAN. Have you any relations with Gov. Cantu, of Lower California?

Mr. KNOX. No; we have had with Gov. De la Huerta, of Sonora.

Senator PHELAN. I had an interview with Gov. Cantu within the last few weeks down in Los Angeles, and he has expelled the Chinese and Japanese from his State. Of course, his object is to give whatever employment there is in his State to the native Mexicans. Do you know anything about that?

Mr. KNOX. No; I do not.

Senator SHEPPARD. Mr. Chairman, we have just time to hear one other witness. I will ask you to hear Mr. Happer.

Senator KING. I suggest, Mr. Knox, if there is anything that you desire to add to your statement that you submit it to the committee in writing.

(Supplemental statement in writing filed by Mr. Knox:—)

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 30, 1920.

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION.

Washington, D. C.

GENTLEMEN: Relative to the request for further information on the necessity of the extension of the privilege of obtaining Mexican laborers for agricultural purposes throughout the Southwest, including the cotton districts of Arizona and California, and the sugar-beet growing States of California, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Montana, and the western portions of Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota, I beg to submit the following:

1. With regard to the cotton industry of the Southwest, I desire to call your attention to the long staple cotton industry now being developed in the Salt River Valley, Casa Grande Valley, and the Santa Cruz Valley of Arizona, and the Imperial Valley of California. This industry has grown in the last three years from about \$500,000 in 1916 to \$20,000,000 in 1919. This particular type of cotton was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and is to-day the finest grade of cotton grown in the world, and is used particularly in fine threads and fancy cotton goods and in the tire industry. The world is to-day facing a great shortage of long-staple cotton. The prewar production of this grade of cotton was practically 2,000,000 bales, more than three-fourths of which was produced in Egypt, the balance being scattered around in various parts of the world, of which the sea island district of the United States produced in the neighborhood of 150,000 bales. Prof. Todd, the greatest authority on long-staple cotton in the world, states that owing to the ravages of insects and the deterioration of the Egyptian staple caused by the seed not being kept pure, it will take an expenditure of over \$1,000,000,000 and from 10 to 20 years

of time to bring the Egyptian output back to a prewar basis. In this country the ravages of the boll-weevil have practically wiped out the sea island industry, the yield having fallen in the last three years from some 150,000 bales to less than 12,000, with every prospect that the plantings this year will be practically negligible. The production, therefore, of this class of cotton in our Southwest becomes all the more important. We have many reasons to believe that the Egyptian crop the coming year will be allocated to the various districts using this class of cotton, with the United States on the short end. Coupled with this natural shortage comes an enormous increase in the use of this class of cotton in the manufacture of automobile tires. Where 10 years ago the use of high-grade cotton in the manufacture of tires did not exceed much over 50,000 bales, the past year the consumption had reached 500,000, with the tire factories increasing their output from 50 to 100 per cent every year. The harvesting of this crop depends entirely upon Mexican labor. This organization, which consists of some 2,000 farmers, have been steadily and persistently endeavored to find some other source of labor than Mexico, and found it absolutely impossible. The situation is simply this, that it is Mexican labor or none, and upon the privilege of obtaining Mexican labor will depend the continuance of this industry. Unless we are assured of some relief from this Congress the planting of cotton in our district will probably be cut down 90 per cent. As the result of this industry the development of thousands of acres of desert land is going on. Several irrigation projects which have remained for years undeveloped are being carried out. This means the adding to the taxable property of Arizona many hundred millions of dollars. It means the development within the next three to five years of an industry that will bring into that State returns of from \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000 annually. It means the development of prosperous towns as well as the furnishing of prosperous homes to many thousand farmers, but it is not Arizona alone that is affected by the production of this cotton. Mills of the East that spin the long staple cotton are vitally affected. The rubber-tire industry is also affected.

As I pointed out at the beginning, the world is to-day facing an enormous shortage of long-staple cotton for the fancy-goods trade, and the only two sections of the world to-day that show promise of development where the production can even be brought to a prewar basis are certain portions of Egypt that will require the outlay of hundreds of millions of dollars capital as well consume from 10 to 20 years of time and our own district—the southern part of Arizona and California—but southwestern Arizona is separated from the thickly-populated sections of the United States by hundreds of miles of desert, so that even if the labor were available in other portions of the country the overhead expense of moving them from 1,000 to 2,000 miles for the short period of work necessary for the harvesting of the crop makes it prohibitive, but the labor is not there. I have made a thorough study of the labor conditions throughout the South and Southwest, as well as the Middle Western States and the Rocky Mountain section, and have yet to find a district where there are any idle men that really desire work. It is by no means a question of cheap labor. It is a question of any labor of any kind whatsoever that will enable us to get our work done. The average earnings of a Mexican family would run from \$30 to \$50 a week. The women and larger children assisting very materially in increasing the earnings of the family. The bringing in of this labor can in no way be construed as taking the bread out of a single American's mouth. In our own little district, as the result of building up this industry, the demand for mechanics of all kinds has increased more than 300 per cent. Wages have advanced for carpenters from \$4 to \$8 per day; plasterers, \$10; bricklayers and plumbers, \$12; automobile mechanics, \$8 to \$10; and all other classes of labor in proportion. Discontinuance of the privilege of obtaining this Mexican labor means the ruination of the cotton industry in that section. As the result of this, the advancement of the valley will cease, and many thousands of white artisans will be thrown out of employment. I do not believe that it is the desire of this committee that the development of our resources should stop, or that such conditions should exist that would cause a now prosperous district to become practically bankrupt, or that any condition should exist that would cause the stopping of development that will add to the Nation's resources, hundreds of thousands of acres of land that is now desert, and yet this is exactly what will happen if we are not allowed to obtain labor from the only source from which it is available and the source to which in all times past we have always looked for assistance for our common labor.

2. With regard to the sugar-beet industry in the sugar-beet growing States of California, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, the western portions of Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota. The sugar-beet industry in all of these States is very large and is, as you know, dependent upon a large supply of hand labor. Certain portions of these districts, particularly California and Colorado, have always depended upon Mexico as their source of supply of common labor for thinning, hoeing, and harvesting the crop. A portion of their supply in times past they have obtained from the Russian colonies and from the western cities, particularly Omaha and Kansas City, but for the last three or four years the amount of Mexican labor that is necessary for this industry has steadily increased. This is probably due to the fact that many of the Russians have themselves become producers and employers of labor as well as to the fact that the factories in the neighborhood of cities have called largely upon this class of help and it looks very attractive to them because there they can find employment the entire year which is impossible on the farm. The need of increased production in sugar is only too well known, but it is impossible to increase the supply unless there is plenty of labor available to grow and harvest the crop. Sugar factories in the States mentioned estimate that some 14,000 laborers above the normal supply on hand will be needed to produce this year's crop of sugar beet and unless there will be available a sufficient supply of labor the crop will be reduced from 40 to 50 per cent. The situation in this district is exactly the same as it is in the cotton district. It is not a question of cheap labor; it is not a question of whether by increasing the wages we can increase the supply, it is purely a question of either this labor or none. The question has continually come up of the earnings of the average Mexican, and from my experience I believe that the average earnings of the average Mexican is much greater than that paid the average school teacher in this country.

In every line of activity there is to-day a great shortage of common labor, and this is more particularly true in the agricultural districts of the southwest than in any other part of the United States, and yet there is available an unlimited supply of good, quiet, peace-loving labor at our door; people who have always, since there was a white settlement in the Southwest, come and gone across the border, coming up into this country to assist us in the harvesting of our crops and returning to their country to spend the colder months, being ready to come again in the spring and grow another crop. Many thousands of these people are to-day in an actual starving condition in Mexico. We need their labor and they need our work. Shall we give it to them or not? Shall we give them what relief we can in this form, thereby making better friends, and, in my opinion, doing more to bridge over the difficulties between Mexico and the United States than any other one thing we can do, and at the same time advance the development of our own country, or shall we refuse to these people the privilege of doing a day's work for a day's pay and at the same time causing the loss of millions upon millions of dollars to this country?

Very respectfully submitted,

ARIZONA COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION,
By WM. H. KNOX, *Secretary and Manager*.
BEST SUGAR LABOR INTEREST,
By W. B. MANDEVILLE.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN A. HAPPER, REPRESENTING THE EL PASO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, EL PASO, TEX.

MR. HAPPER. Gentlemen, I represent the El Paso Chamber of Commerce. For the last 20 years El Paso has been the principal point on the border where Mexicans have come into this country as laborers. Probably more than 50 per cent that have come from the Republic of Mexico have come in at that point. They are distributed to the farm lands of west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Kansas, and the beet-sugar fields, the apple-growing districts, and the fruit-growing districts of the West.

Prior to the passage of the law that went into effect in May, 1917, they came in without restriction. Since then, under the war-time

regulations, they have been coming in under the regulations of the Department of Labor. Those regulations are such that when a laborer comes to this country he is photographed, and his photograph accompanies him. One is given to him in person, one given to the employer, and one kept by the Government to follow him by. The people that hire him are obligated, under the rules of the Department of Labor, to return him to Mexico within a specified time. As stated by Mr. KNOX, the regulations put into effect by the Department of Labor as a war-time measure have worked successfully. The labor importations from Mexico in the last few years have run from 65,000 to 120,000 a year. This year they figure it will take from 250,000 to 300,000 to handle the beet-sugar crop—for the farmers, not for the corporations—the fruit crop, the cotton crop, and other farming industries, as well as the railroads, if they use them.

Senator KING. Is there any discrimination shown in favor of the large landholders as against the small landholder in the distribution of this imported labor?

Mr. HAPPER. None whatever, except this, that the large landholder generally has a representative to look after his interests directly, whereas the small owner does not. But since the war regulations have been in effect they have been distributed regardless of that by an official of the United States Government with a representative of these large corporations.

Senator KING. Then no contention could be raised that this is a scheme to furnish labor for the very large corporations?

Mr. HAPPER. I do not know of any corporations that use them. Some corporations furnish the farm labor, like the labor for the beet-sugar fields and the cotton fields, but I have never heard of a large corporation using this farm labor to any great extent.

Senator KING. And this labor is distributed among the farmers?

Mr. HAPPER. Distributed among the farmers everywhere.

Senator PHELAN. Who fixes the wages?

Senator SHEPPARD. Senator, Mr. Knox would like to make a comment here.

Mr. KNOX. I will say that that was my business. We have one concern that has some 8,000 acres, and those men do not get one solitary man more than their share, and they do not get theirs until the little fellow is fixed.

Senator KING. The small landowner has the preference?

Mr. KNOX. The small landowner will take first preference always, and the price is set by the Government when we go down with our applications.

Senator PHELAN. By the Government?

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

Senator PHELAN. And the Mexican laborer goes where he is directed, to one plantation or another?

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

Senator PHELAN. And exercises no volition?

Mr. KNOX. If he does not like the ranch we put him on, we will move him to another.

Mr. HAPPER. And they have been earning from \$3.50 up to almost any amount.

Senator KING. Some of them got \$10 a day in my State.

Senator STERLING. Who did you say fixes the wages?

Mr. HAPPER. They are fixed at so much an acre for picking beets, so much a hundred pounds for picking cotton—

Senator PHELAN. By whom?

Mr. HAPPER. By the Government—by the Department of Labor—before they bring them in.

Senator PHELAN. And if some make more it is because they are more industrious?

Mr. HAPPER. Some of them make as high as \$10 or \$12 or \$16.

Senator PHELAN. That is on account of their great industry?

Mr. HAPPER. Yes, sir; absolutely.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN WALSH, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX., REPRESENTING TEXAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I represent the Texas Chamber of Commerce, and I am in receipt of a telegram from Mr. James E. George, general manager of the Texas Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. J. S. Coleman, the president, asking me to appear here in support of some legislation that will in some way permit the continuance of the entry of Mexican labor into Texas.

I have been interested in the matter because I have been taking up with the general manager the proposition of extending the license to enter the United States for a continued period, but the Department of Labor has conclusively shut the door. They have issued an order to the effect that no more Mexican labor shall enter this country after the 31st of December, 1919, and all those that are in the country must leave before the first day of February, 1920.

Senator PHELAN. Unless qualified.

Mr. WALSH. Unless qualified, but under the general rules.

To show you how extensive is the demand that this labor shall be allowed to enter Texas, the chamber of commerce represents every civic organization in the State of Texas, and they are deeply interested in the matter, not alone for local reasons—because the failure of the entry of this labor into Texas works havoc with local conditions—but on account of the economic conditions that exist in the industry.

Cotton is a prime necessity; it is a basic industry with legislators and economists—everyone, in fact—seeking some remedy for the high cost of living. It will no doubt cause a great shortage in cotton for milling purposes and, of course, raise the price of that necessity to the people generally.

So the Texas Chamber of Commerce sends me here to record at least that it is earnestly in favor of this legislation, or some legislation which will permit the existence of conditions such as have heretofore existed in that country, and will permit them to continue as they have, and not allow a condition to arise which will deal havoc generally with the situation and interfere generally with the program for the reduction of the cost of living all over the entire country.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the time for picking and chopping cotton? What month?

Senator SHEPPARD. Mr. Roberts can answer that.

The CHAIRMAN. What time would you need this Mexican labor the most? In what month?

Mr. ROBERTS. We ought to have the doors open the 1st of April for cotton. They ought to be open now for truck.

The CHAIRMAN. I was wondering how much time we might have to deliberate.

Mr. KNOX. We must have men by the 1st of March in the sugar-beet industry.

Senator KING. There are some crops grown in some parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, all the year around, are there not?

Mr. KNOX. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. So that the need for agricultural labor is not confined to one particular season, but you need agricultural labor in those sections all the time?

Mr. KNOX. All the time. In your State, especially, Senator, by the 1st of March some of the sugar-beet districts are going to need Mexican labor.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAVID KEANE, 80 MAIDEN LANE, NEW YORK, N. Y., REPRESENTING THE SALT RIVER VALLEY COTTON CO.

Mr. KEANE. Mr. Chairman, I represent the Salt River Valley Cotton Co., which has large investments in Arizona, at Phoenix, at Florence, and at Topock, on the Colorado River.

I have come here merely in their interest, to say to you that the exclusion of Mexican labor from Arizona would result in incalculable loss and injury to the investors in cotton there. The United States Government, through the Interior Department, has promoted and encouraged the growing of cotton in Arizona, and has invested a great deal of money toward that end. The waters of the Roosevelt Dam are used almost exclusively in the cotton plantations.

If Mexican labor is excluded, the result will be not only a loss to the cotton growers but a loss to the United States Government and a loss to the State of Arizona. We hope, therefore, that this joint resolution 66 will be reported favorably.

The CHAIRMAN. If there is anything you desire to add to your statement you may submit it in writing.

(Thereupon, at 12 o'clock m. the committee adjourned, to meet in executive session at 2.30 o'clock p. m. the same day.)

**END OF
TITLE**